

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The Official Action sets forth an objection to Claim 1 due to the use of the phrases "first member" and "second member." The Official Action notes that such terms are not consistent with the terminology used in the specification. To address this matter, Claim 1 as well as other claims have been amended without narrowing the claim scope to refer to a clutch drum instead of the first member and to refer to a hub instead of the second member. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

The subject matter at issue in this application pertains to an automatic transmission apparatus in which a clutch drum rotates integrally with an input shaft and includes a first cylindrical portion having an inner spline at its inner peripheral surface, and a hub including a second cylindrical portion having an outer spline engaging the inner spline of the clutch drum. The hub also includes a depressed portion. By virtue of this depressed portion, a clearance is formed between the outer surface of the depressed portion of the hub and the inner peripheral surface of the clutch drum. This clearance establishes communication between an inner portion surrounded by the hub and an outer portion outside the clutch drum.

The Official sets forth a rejection of original independent Claim 1 based on the disclosure contained in U.S. Patent No. 5,230,664 to *Michioka et al.* The Official Action notes that the automatic transmission disclosed in *Michioka et al.* includes a clutch drum 13 corresponding to the originally recited first member (clutch drum). In addition, the Official Action notes that the combination of the clutch drum 20 and the

rotating member 47 disclosed in *Michioka et al.* correspond to the originally claimed second member (hub). *Michioka et al.* describes that the clutch drum 20 is splined to the clutch drum 13. The Official Action interprets the valley/groove bottoms of the outer spline on the clutch drum 20 that mesh with the spline on the clutch drum 13 as constituting a depressed portion. It is thus understood that the rejection is based on the interpretation that the valley or groove bottom of the outer spline can be aid to form a depressed portion, and that such depressed potion defines a clearance corresponding to the clearance recited in original independent Claim 1.

Taking into account this interpretation, it is noted that in the automatic transmission apparatus at issue here, the hub 41 is configured to include a depressed portion 42 extending radially inwardly, and the depressed portion is located between two adjacent regions where the inner and outer splines engage one another such as illustrated in Fig. 3. Further, the clearance 43 that is formed between the outer surface of the depressed portion 42 of the hub 41 and the inner peripheral surface of the clutch drum 31 possess a radial dimension greater than the radial dimension between the inner surface of the inner spline and the outer surface of the outer spline in the two adjacent regions where the inner and outer splines engage one another. That is, looking at Fig. 3 of the present application, it can be seen that the radial dimension of the clearance 43 defined between the outer surface of the depressed portion 42 and the inner surface of the clutch drum 31 is greater than the radial dimension between the inner surface of the inner spline on the clutch drum and the outer surface of the outer spline on the hub in the two regions adjacent the clearance where the inner and outer splines engage one another. Claim 1 has

been amended to recite this distinction for purposes of negating the interpretation set forth in the Official Action.

It is thus respectfully submitted that the automatic transmission apparatus recited in independent Claim 1, as well as the various dependent claims, is patentably distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Michioka et al.*

New dependent Claim 6 has been added and recites that the radial dimension of the clearance gradually increases in a circumferential direction of the depressed portion from a region adjacent where the inner and outer splines engage one another to the middle portion of the depressed portion. This further aspect of the claimed subject matter further distinguishes over the disclosure contained in *Michioka et al.*

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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